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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/45/685 and Corr.1)]

45/31. Question of the United States Virgin Islands

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of the United States Virgin Islands,

Having examined the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, 1/

Recalling its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and all resolutions and decisions of the United Nations relating to the United States Virgin Islands, including in particular General Assembly resolution 44/99 of 11 December 1989,

Conscious of the need to ensure the full and speedy implementation of the Declaration in respect of the Territory,

Having heard the statement of the representative of the United States of America, as the administering Power, 2/

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1/ A/45/23 (Part III), chap. IV; A/45/23 (Part IV), chaps. V and VI; and A/45/23 (Part VI) and (Part VI)/Corr.1, chap. IX.

2/ See A/C.4/45/SR.12.

Noting the statement by the representative of the administering Power that her Government continues to maintain its long-standing support for the principle of self-determination and that the Territories under its administration are pursuing their right to self-determination at a pace of their own choosing, 3/

Also noting the statement by the representative of the administering Power that the referendum on the future status of the United States Virgin Islands planned for November 1989 had been rescheduled by the territorial Government for June 1991, as a result of the devastation of hurricane Hugo in September 1989, and that provision had been made for a further run-off election in December 1991, 3/

Noting that the public education programme was begun in January 1989 and that efforts are being made to streamline the political education and referendum process by, inter alia, dividing the seven political options into three categories,

Noting the statement by the representative of the Territory that the Commission on Status and Federal Relations considered, inter alia, the relevance of international law in the process of self-determination, voter residency requirements for political status referendums and the role of the United Nations in observing acts of self-determination, and noting also the concerns expressed by the Commission and the territorial Government regarding residency requirements for participation in acts of self-determination, and the relevant United Nations resolutions regarding acts of self-determination in colonial Territories, 4/

Aware of the special circumstances of the geographical location and economic conditions of the Territory, and bearing in mind the necessity of diversifying and strengthening further its economy as a matter of priority in order to promote economic stability,

Recalling with concern the devastation caused by hurricane Hugo to the Territory, particularly to its social and economic infrastructure and to the tourism and agricultural sectors,

Noting the statement by the Governor of the Territory in February 1990 that he had requested permission from the administering Power to seek associate membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 5/

Noting the objections of the administering Power to the request by the United States Virgin Islands for associate membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and its statement that it would continue to encourage and support the Territory's informal co-operation with the members of that organization,

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3/ See A/45/23 (Part VI) and (Part VI)/Corr.1, chap. IX, sect. B.16, para. 103 (5).

4/ Ibid., para. 103 (7).

5/ Ibid., para. 103 (14).

Noting the continued concern expressed by a petitioner at the reclamation and development of submerged land at Long Bay in the Charlotte Amalie Harbour, and noting also the statement by the representative of the administering Power that the issue had been settled by litigation and that those activities were subject to the regulatory powers of the Government of the Territory, 6/

Noting with concern the vulnerability of the Territory to drug trafficking and related activities,

Noting the active interest of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands in participating in the related work of the international and regional organizations concerned,

Recalling the dispatch in 1977 of a United Nations visiting mission to the Territory,

Mindful that United Nations visiting missions provide an effective means of assessing the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and considering that the possibility of sending a further visiting mission to the United States Virgin Islands at an appropriate time should be kept under review,

1. Approves the section of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to the United States Virgin Islands; 7/

2. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of the United States Virgin Islands to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

3. Reiterates the view that such factors as territorial size, geographical location, size of population and limited natural resources should in no way delay the speedy exercise by the people of the Territory of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Declaration, which fully applies to the United States Virgin Islands;

4. Reiterates that it is the responsibility of the United States of America, as the administering Power, to continue to create such conditions in the United States Virgin Islands as will enable the people of the Territory to exercise freely and without interference their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV);

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6/ Ibid., para. 103 (13).

7/ Ibid., chap. IX, sect. B.16.

5. Reaffirms that it is ultimately for the people of the United States Virgin Islands themselves to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection calls upon the administering Power, in co-operation with the territorial Government, to facilitate programmes of political education in the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of the possibilities open to them in the exercise of their right to self-determination;

6. Reaffirms the responsibility of the administering Power to continue to promote the economic and social development of the United States Virgin Islands, and reiterates the importance of diversifying the Territory's economy with a view to reducing its heavy economic dependence on the administering Power;

7. Urges the administering Power, in co-operation with the territorial Government, to take effective measures to safeguard and guarantee the inalienable right of the people of the United States Virgin Islands to own and dispose of the natural resources of the Territory, including marine resources, and to establish and maintain control over the future development of those resources;

8. Expresses its concern about the continued depletion of the Territory's marine resources, and urges the administering Power, in consultation with the territorial Government, to take the necessary steps to reverse this trend;

9. Calls upon the administering Power to continue to take all necessary measures, in co-operation with the territorial Government, to counter problems related to drug trafficking;

10. Urges the administering Power to facilitate the participation of the United States Virgin Islands in various international and regional organizations;

11. Also urges the administering Power, Member States and relevant agencies of the United Nations system to continue to contribute generously towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Territory in accordance with resolution 44/99;

12. Invites the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to take all necessary measures to accelerate progress in the social and economic life of the Territory;

13. Urges the administering Power to continue to take all necessary measures to comply fully with the purposes and principles of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly relating to military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration;

14. Requests the Special Committee to continue the examination of this question at its next session, including the possible dispatch of a further visiting mission to the United States Virgin Islands at an appropriate time and in consultation with the administering Power, particularly in the light of the referendum referred to in the seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs of the present resolution, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

44th plenary meeting
20 November 1990